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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re PATENT APPLICATION of

JONES et al.

Appln. No.: 09/785,462

Filed: February 20, 2001

FOR: E² AUTOMOBILE DEALERSHIP INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM



Group Art Unit: 2672

Examiner: Unassigned

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December 17, 2001

PETITION TO MAKE SPECIAL UNDER 37 CFR §1.102(d)

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Applicants hereby petition pursuant to MPEP §708.02(VIII) to make the above-identified U.S. patent application special.

If it is determined that the pending claims are not directed to a single invention, Applicants will make an election without traverse as required under MPEP §708.02(VIII)(b).

Applicants submit that a pre-examination search has been made by a professional searcher in the following Classes:

Class 705, subclasses 1 and 30

Class 705, subclasses 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 22, 26, 28, 32 and 38

Class 707, subclass 100

Class 345, subclass 334

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Enclosed herewith are copies of the following references which are presently, from among those of record, the most closely related to the subject matter encompassed by the claims.

<u>U.S. PATENT NO.</u>	<u>INVENTOR(S)</u>
5,778,178	Arunachalam
5,663,746	Pellenberg et al.
5,774,883	Andersen et al.
5,794,206	Wilkinson et al.
5,953,707	Huang et al.
5,974,395	Bellini et al.
5,987,500	Arunachalam
4,989,141	Lyons et al.
5,319,544	Schmerer et al.

DETAILED DISCUSSION OF THE REFERENCES

U.S. Patent No. 5,778,178 - Arunachalam

This patent discloses a method and apparatus for providing real-time, two-way transactional capabilities on the Web. Specifically, one embodiment of the present invention discloses a method for enabling object routing, the method comprising the steps of creating a virtual information store containing information entries and attributes associating each of the information entries and the attributes with an object identity, and assigning a unique network address to each of the object identities. A method is also disclosed for enabling service

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management of the value-added network service, to perform OAM&P functions on the services network.

U.S. Patent No. 5,663,746 - Pellenberg et al.

This patent discloses an interactive information kiosk assembly (10) for use by automotive dealerships, or the like, to inform potential customers about the exterior paint colors and the colors and materials for upholstery and trim available for selected model automobiles. The interactive information kiosk assembly (10) has a series of turntable assemblies (58, 59, 61) having a series of color and material swatches (67, 68, 69) that are indicative of the color and material choices available for the exterior paint, upholstery and trim of selected model automobiles. The turntable assemblies (58, 59, 61) are rotatable about a vertical axis extending through the kiosk assembly (10) to enable the customer to mix and match varying exterior paint colors with various upholstery and trim materials and colors. An interactive video display monitor (82) is provided for displaying a video image of a selected model automobile having a selected combination of exterior paint, upholstery and trim colors and materials.

U.S. Patent No. 5,774,883 - Andersen et al.

This patent discloses a transaction management system and method of validating the sale of an asset. The system may be used by a vehicle dealership to evaluate a customer's credit risk, budgetary factors, and profitability of the sale during negotiations for sale of a vehicle, thereby facilitating the sale from both the customer's and dealership's point of view by properly structuring the transaction. The system enables the dealer to pool front-end and back-end profit items to maximize profits. The system performs expert functions to funnel the customer's credit information into a best fit with one of a plurality of specific finance program tiers.

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U.S. Patent No. 5,794,206 - Wilkinson et al.

This patent discloses an interchange window (106) of a graphical user interface. The interchange window (106) may display at least one interchange entry (95). The interchange entry (95) is associated with an interchange (54) of an Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) message (50). The interchange window (106) may include a status icon (120) representing the status of the interchange (54). In accordance with another aspect of the present invention, the interchange window (106) may include a translation report sub-window (222) and a data set sub-window (220). Additionally, the interchange window (106) may display a functional group entry (96) associated with a functional group (60) of the interchange (54) and a document entry (98) associated with a document (66) of the interchange (54).

U.S. Patent No. 5,953,707 - Huang et al.

This patent discloses a decision support system for the management of an agile supply chain that provides an architecture including a server side and a client side. The server side includes a decision support system database that interfaces with a model engine that performs analysis of the data to support planning decisions. The server side includes a server manager that coordinates requests for service and information. The client side includes decision frames that present the various view points available in the system to the users. A frame manager coordinates the requests from decision support frames to access the needed data and models. The decision support frames provide a view into the supply chain and integrate analytical models responsive to the view point of a business process such as demand management. The frames include a supply management frame, a demand management frame, a vendor managed replenishment frame, a Planning, Sales and Inventory planning frame, and a distribution network design frame.

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The frame manager includes a system integrator and a functional integrator. A database management system manages the supply and maintenance of information needed by the modeling processes through the frame manager. A domain management process limits data available to said frame responsive to a user selection. The system also includes a demand and supply reconciliation process; a capacity planning process; a vendor managed replenishment process; and a scenario management process.

U.S. Patent No. 5,974,395 - Bellini et al.

This patent discloses a system for extended enterprise planning across a supply chain. The system includes transactional execution system layers (14, 18) for a demand enterprise (10) and a supply enterprise (12). First and second federated electronic planning interchange layers (16, 20) provide a data specification format and an external communication interface for transactional execution system layers (14, 18). A supply chain planning engine (22), operable to perform planning for the supply chain, is in communication with a third federal electronic planning interchange layer (24) which provides a data specification format and an external communication interface for the supply chain planning engine (22). A data access/transfer layer (28) interconnects and allows transfer of information between the first, second and third electronic federated planning interchange layers (16, 20, 24). The supply chain planning engine (22), the first transactional execution system (14) and the second transactional execution system (18) can thereby communicate data which the supply chain planning engine (22) can use to provide constraint based extended enterprise planning across the supply chain.

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U.S. Patent No. 5,987,500 - Arunachalam

This patent discloses a method and apparatus for providing real-time, two-way transactional capabilities on the Web. Specifically, one embodiment of the present invention discloses a configurable value-added network switch for enabling real-time transactions on the World Wide Web. The configurable value added network switch comprises a system for switching to a transactional application in response to a user specification from a World Wide Web application, a system means for transmitting a transaction request from the transactional application, and a system for processing the transaction request. Additionally, a method for enabling object routing is disclosed, comprising the steps of creating a virtual information store containing information entries and attributes associating each of the information entries and the attributes with an object identity, and assigning a unique network address to each of the object identities. Finally, a method is disclosed for enabling service management of the value-added network service, to perform OAM&P functions on the services network.

U.S. Patent No. 4,989,141 - Lyons et al.

This patent discloses an advanced financial reporting and analysis software package. The package collects, organizes, manages and consolidates financial data and provides user defined capabilities for creating financial and corporate reports. Financial data is organized into four business classifications and dimensions: Schedule, Entity, Period and Type. Data is stored in the system in such a way that all data associated with a particular Schedule, Entity, Period and Type is identified by that particular SEPT value. To accommodate automatic data entry, a mapping means or template is provided that specifies for each different input spreadsheet the location of the first data cell in the spreadsheet and the size of the spreadsheet. Data is read from the data

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store by various report and spreadsheet generating functions which convert data associated with particular SEPT values to desired output formats.

U.S. Patent No. 5,319,544 - Schmerer et al.

This patent discloses a system and method for monitoring and verifying inventory. The system comprises a portable computer with a printer and modem all “cabled” together and maintained in a carrying case. The portable computer communicates with a mainframe computer on which certain dealer inventory information is maintained. Software, residing on a disk which is accessible by the portable computer, allows for the input of dealer codes which are used to identify inventory information which is downloaded from the mainframe computer to the portable computer. The inventory information is used to support an audit of a dealer’s inventory. The system of the present invention provides an auditor with an up-to-date record a dealer’s current inventory. The system also provides the auditor with a means for printing out a checklist for use in undertaking the inventory, for preparing reconciliation reports for verifying the auditor’s findings with the dealer and input means for inputting the results of the inventory. Ultimately, a final inventory report can be printed which includes the present status of all inventory items and any and all charges collected.

THE PRESENT APPLICATION

The present application discloses an integrated software application architecture with all functions required by an automobile dealership, including sales, F&I (finance and insurance), accounting, HR (Human Resources)/payroll, parts, service, and E² core (including functions in

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customer management, vehicle management, activity/processors, roles, user/departments, security, user interface, reports, printing, and instant messaging), together with e-business enablers, supply chain integration, and a dealer communication system. The architecture disclosed in the present application also provides relational databases and GUI's (graphical user interfaces, that is, browser based application program interfaces). The architecture disclosed in the present application also may be implemented by an operations center with a Microsoft Windows NT server providing local Ethernet or other electronic connections to several multiple remote stores for the operator, and is scalable.

In an aspect, the present invention as claimed in independent claims 1, 2 and 3 includes displaying on a display device, to a plurality of customer service representative workstations, a plurality of point-and-click graphical user interface screens, each screen with a menu of icons for activating a plurality of functions, and each screen presenting data, where the plurality of functions comprise: sales, finance and insurance, accounting, human resources, payroll, parts, service, customer database, vehicle database, activities and processes, roles, users and departments, security, reports, printing, instant messaging, e-business enablers, supply chain integration, electronic time clock, system configurator, vehicle inspection, Internet service scheduling, electronic mail service reminders, intra-dealer parts inventory, inter-dealer parts inventory, intra-dealer vehicle inventory, inter-dealer vehicle inventory and dealer communication system, and means therefor.

The patents to Arunachalam (both patents), Pellenberg et al., Andersen et al., Wilkinson et al., Huang et al., Bellini et al., Lyons et al. and Schmerer et al. fail to disclose, teach or suggest a method using a computer for displaying a graphical user interface for an information management system, a programmable apparatus for displaying a graphical user interface for an

information management system and a machine readable medium containing instructions, which when executed by a computer, cause the computer to execute a method as claimed in claims 1, 2 and 3 comprising displaying on a display device, to a plurality of customer service representative workstations, a plurality of point-and-click graphical user interface screens, each screen with a menu of icons for activating a plurality of functions, and each screen presenting data, where the plurality of functions comprise: sales, finance and insurance, accounting, human resources, payroll, parts, service, customer database, vehicle database, activities and processes, roles, users and departments, security, reports, printing, instant messaging, e-business enablers, supply chain integration, electronic time clock, system configurator, vehicle inspection, Internet service scheduling, electronic mail service reminders, intra-dealer parts inventory, inter-dealer parts inventory, intra-dealer vehicle inventory, inter-dealer vehicle inventory and dealer communication system, and means therefor.

In a further aspect, the present invention as claimed in independent claim 4 comprises a plurality of store processors, located at automobile dealership sites, a plurality of workstations located at the automobile dealership sites, each workstation in electronic communications with a store processor, an operations server, in electronic communication with the plurality of store processors, the operations server having software and databases for an enterprise-wide information management system for automobile dealerships, and the plurality of workstations enabling access to the enterprise-wide information management system of the operations server.

The patents to Arunachalam (both patents), Pellenberg et al., Andersen et al., Wilkinson et al., Huang et al., Bellini et al., Lyons et al. and Schmerer et al. fail to disclose, teach or suggest a computer system for an information management system as claimed in claim 4 (and its dependent claim) comprising a plurality of store processors, located at automobile dealership

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sites, a plurality of workstations located at the automobile dealership sites, each workstation in electronic communications with a store processor, an operations server, in electronic communication with the plurality of store processors, the operations server having software and databases for an enterprise-wide information management system for automobile dealerships, and the plurality of workstations enabling access to the enterprise-wide information management system of the operations server.

In another aspect, the present invention as claimed in independent claim 6 comprises a branding region, a task bar, a content region, and a context region, wherein, for a plurality of different applications, a location and size of each region and the task bar remains substantially constant, despite changes in content displayed in each region.

The patents to Arunachalam (both patents), Pellenberg et al., Andersen et al., Wilkinson et al., Huang et al., Bellini et al., Lyons et al. and Schmerer et al. fail to disclose, teach or suggest a programmable apparatus to generate a graphical user interface as claimed in claim 6 (and its dependent claims) wherein the graphical user interface comprises a branding region, a task bar, a content region, and a context region, wherein, for a plurality of different applications, a location and size of each region and the task bar remains substantially constant, despite changes in content displayed in each region.

In another aspect, the present invention as claimed in independent claims 10 and 14 comprise generating a branding region, generating a task bar, generating a content region, and generating a context region, wherein, for a plurality of different applications, a location and size of each region and the task bar remains substantially constant, despite changes in content displayed in each region.

The patents to Arunachalam (both patents), Pellenberg et al., Andersen et al., Wilkinson

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et al., Huang et al., Bellini et al., Lyons et al. and Schmerer et al. fail to disclose, teach or suggest a method of generating a graphical user interface in a display device or a machine readable medium containing instructions, which when executed by a computer, causes the computer to execute a method as claimed in claims 10 and 14 (and their dependent claims as applicable) comprising generating a branding region, generating a task bar, generating a content region, and generating a context region, wherein, for a plurality of different applications, a location and size of each region and the task bar remains substantially constant, despite changes in content displayed in each region.

In a further aspect, the present invention as claimed in independent claim 18 comprises means to generate a graphical user interface with a plurality of display regions, using a programmable apparatus, each display region corresponding to an automobile lease term, and each display region being further divided into sub-regions, the sub-regions displaying information pertaining to available lease programs, the information selected from the group consisting of: lessor identification, money factor, residual percentage, residual amount, back end gross, total deal gross, initial payment, amount due on delivery, the lease term, and the monthly payment.

The patents to Arunachalam (both patents), Pellenberg et al., Andersen et al., Wilkinson et al., Huang et al., Bellini et al., Lyons et al. and Schmerer et al. fail to disclose, teach or suggest a programmable apparatus to display a graphical user interface as claimed in claim 18 (and its dependent claim) wherein the graphical user interface comprises means to generate a graphical user interface with a plurality of display regions, using a programmable apparatus, each display region corresponding to an automobile lease term, and each display region being further divided into sub-regions, the sub-regions displaying information pertaining to available lease programs,

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the information selected from the group consisting of: lessor identification, money factor, residual percentage, residual amount, back end gross, total deal gross, initial payment, amount due on delivery, the lease term, and the monthly payment.

In another aspect, the present invention as claimed in independent claims 20 and 22 comprises generating a graphical user interface with a plurality of display regions, using a programmable apparatus, each display region corresponding to an automobile lease term, and each display region being further divided into sub-regions, the sub-regions displaying information pertaining to available lease programs, the information selected from the group consisting of: lessor identification, money factor, residual percentage, residual amount, back end gross, total deal gross, initial payment, amount due on delivery, the lease term, and the monthly payment.

The patents to Arunachalam (both patents), Pellenberg et al., Andersen et al., Wilkinson et al., Huang et al., Bellini et al., Lyons et al. and Schmerer et al. fail to disclose, teach or suggest a method of displaying a graphical user interface on a display device or a machine readable medium containing instructions which when executed by a programmable apparatus causes the apparatus to execute a method as claimed in claims 20 and 22 (and their dependent claims as applicable) comprising generating a graphical user interface with a plurality of display regions, using a programmable apparatus, each display region corresponding to an automobile lease term, and each display region being further divided into sub-regions, the sub-regions displaying information pertaining to available lease programs, the information selected from the group consisting of: lessor identification, money factor, residual percentage, residual amount, back end gross, total deal gross, initial payment, amount due on delivery, the lease term, and the monthly payment.

In another aspect, the present invention as claimed in independent claims 24, 25 and 26 comprises collecting with a programmable apparatus, for an individual automobile service person, the total time that the person was at a job site during a period, collecting and aggregating from an automobile service transaction records database, the time allocated to each automobile service job for that person, and comparing the total time allocated for that person for all service jobs to the total time that person was at the job site, to develop a productivity analysis for that person for that period, and the means therefor.

The patents to Arunachalam (both patents), Pellenberg et al., Andersen et al., Wilkinson et al., Huang et al., Bellini et al., Lyons et al. and Schmerer et al. fail to disclose, teach or suggest a method executed by a programmable apparatus, a machine readable medium containing instructions which when executed by a programmable apparatus causes the apparatus to execute a method, and a programmable apparatus as claimed in claims 24, 25 and 26 comprising collecting with a programmable apparatus, for an individual automobile service person, the total time that the person was at a job site during a period, collecting and aggregating from an automobile service transaction records database, the time allocated to each automobile service job for that person, and comparing the total time allocated for that person for all service jobs to the total time that person was at the job site, to develop a productivity analysis for that person for that period, and the means therefor.

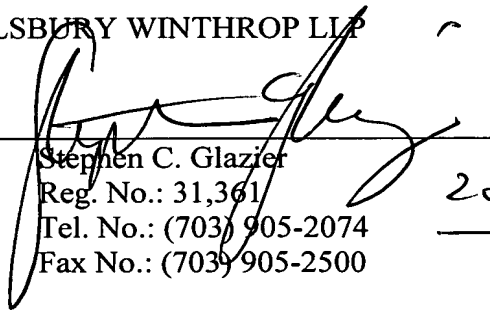
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Therefore, the present application claims subject matter which is not disclosed, taught or suggested by the foregoing references and is patentable in light thereof. Accordingly, the granting of this Petition to Make Special and expedited examination of the claims in the present application are earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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